

Mr. BOND. Well, Mr. President, might I ask consent to conclude my remarks.

Mr. DODD. I say to the Senator, he can do that. I will propound a consent request, Mr. President, that the Senator be allowed to conclude in 5 minutes. Is that appropriate?

Mr. BOND. Yes.

Mr. DODD. Five minutes; and my colleague would like 15 minutes. So I ask, Mr. President, unanimous consent that the Senator from Missouri be allowed to proceed for 5 minutes and the Senator from Iowa for an additional 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and thank my colleagues.

Since 1998, the United States has been supporting the counternarcotics effort President Clinton initiated known as Plan Colombia, and today our mutual objectives have evolved from a strict counternarcotics focus to encompass counterterrorism activities as well. Our investment has paid off.

With U.S. aid to Colombian security forces and assistance and trade preferences under the Andean trade preferences agreement, the Colombian people have been positively transforming their nation. Others, however, under the Andean trade preference agreement in Bolivia and Ecuador have produced less encouraging results, even taking sides with aggressively hostile Hugo Chavez.

I believe we ought to have a debate about extending them the full benefits of the Andean trade agreement. If I had the opportunity to offer an amendment, I would have limited the questionable Governments of Ecuador and Bolivia to 1 year while giving much longer protection to Colombia.

The message is simple: reward our friends and allies in the world, not those who wish us ill or support our enemies.

Colombia has been our friend and ally in an increasingly left-leaning, anti-American Latin America. We must take the opportunity to reward and thank them by passing the Colombia FTA.

This agreement also benefits America's economy by increasing exports and generating jobs. Upon entry into force of the agreement, over 80 percent of U.S. exports of agricultural, consumer, and industrial goods to Colombia would enter duty-free immediately.

The Colombian free-trade agreement will benefit America.

Another strategically important part of the world where the United States has an opportunity to increase cooperation and deploy its smart power is in India.

India is a friendly democracy strategically sitting between the two places American strategists worry most about: China and the Middle East.

We are natural allies as two of the world's largest democracies and we should be much closer. And the feeling,

by and large, is mutual among the people of India.

India has more Muslims—150 million or so—than any other country in the world except Indonesia, which I have spoken extensively on this floor about engaging more proactively. Positive engagement of American smart power and increased economic opportunities will help prevent the likelihood of al-Qaida or radicalization of this large Muslim population.

During my trip to India in March of 2006, the major item of interest to all of the Government and private-sector officials I met, from Prime Minister Singh to businessmen in New Delhi, was the support for the civilian nuclear technology agreement which was signed as I was in the air. I was asked about it when I landed and could not answer. But I spent a day being fully briefed by our Embassy and intelligence officials.

After extensive discussions with Indian and American officials, as well as intelligence briefings, I reached the conclusion that this agreement is a very positive step for the United States and India.

It would aid in cementing a good working relationship with the world's largest democracy in a strategic part of the world. I support this agreement and agree with our bipartisan leadership that we must defeat the amendments which would merely delay and possibly sidetrack approval.

India has three paramount challenges ahead that it must address: First, it must improve its infrastructure and roads. Second, it must deal with the extreme poverty of its huge rural population. Thirty percent of its population live below the official poverty line. Third, India, just like the United States, must be able to meet the demand for increases in energy.

A strong relationship between India and the U.S. is vital to ensuring peaceful development and continued prosperity in South and Southeast Asia.

Regional rivalries, particularly with China will continue to heat up in a race for energy to fuel both India's and China's rapidly expanding economies and societies. An increase in nuclear power production in India through the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement would help to cool these rivalries in their race for energy resources.

In a land where air quality is a major problem, despite recent improvements, this agreement would allow India to meet its surging energy requirements in an environmentally friendly manner.

Further, increasing the supply of energy in India, make no mistake about it, also indirectly helps consumers at the pump here at home as well.

In addition to nuclear power, during my visit I also encouraged the development of clean coal technology. With the fourth largest coal reserves in the world, India and the U.S. should work together to develop that source of energy as well.

Developing energy solutions together with India will increase our engagement and lead to other economic opportunities for Americans.

I hope my colleagues will support this agreement between the United States and India without amendment.

It will safeguard Indian nuclear facilities and help meet the surging demand for global energy supplies in this critical Nation.

And most importantly, it will solidify our relationship with a strategically important country that for too long suffered under the burden of a Soviet-style economy. Now it is opening its market, shares our democratic values, and is on its way to becoming one of the world's three largest economies.

I urge my colleagues to act on solidifying our partnership with two critically important countries, Colombia and India.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR

PETE DOMENICI

Mr. President, I want to say that the passing of the mental health parity bill will be a great tribute to a wonderful friend, PETE DOMENICI, a true icon. He has been a longtime champion of this issue, and this will be a great testament to his leadership.

I worked with PETE on the Budget Committee. I say thanks, PETE, for making me take all the tough votes. It was ugly but necessary, just like the financial rescue package.

He is most recognized for his work on energy. I am very proud to have supported him in his efforts over many years to develop an abundant energy resource, long before \$4 gasoline brought the issue home to every American.

Just as important to me, I will miss the great friendship of a wonderful man, PETE DOMENICI, and his magnificent wife Nancy.

PETE is known for his devotion to his friends and family—to his wife Nancy of 50 years and their 8 children.

PETE is also known for his devotion and dedication to New Mexico.

Born and raised in New Mexico, PETE has served his State in the U.S. Senate now for 36 years—making him the most senior Senator New Mexico has ever had.

PETE has also earned the title as the only Republican to ever be elected by New Mexico for a 6-year Senate term—in a State not known to lean Republican.

PETE's contributions to his State are well known to his constituents in New Mexico—whether it is fighting for solutions to the State's water crisis, supporting New Mexico schools, or ensuring New Mexico gets their fair share of tax dollars.

PETE's contributions to our Nation are also well known. He understands the importance of keeping America as a leader in science and technology and has worked for improvements to the math and science education our school children need to succeed.

PETE has also fought passionately for fiscal responsibility to ensure tax